

Schatz	Stabenow	Warnock
Schumer	Sullivan	Warren
Shaheen	Tester	Whitehouse
Sinema	Van Hollen	Wyden
Smith	Warner	

## NAYS—46

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Wicker
Daines	McConnell	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Paul	

## NOT VOTING—1

Rounds

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David M. Prouty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2026.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

## EGYPT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, rightfully, this body is consumed with pending votes on infrastructure, but I want to draw my colleagues' attention to another matter of both importance and urgency.

One of Vladimir Putin's favorite tactics during the Chechen rebellion was to kidnap the innocent relatives of rebel leaders and hold them captive until the leaders surrendered. Sometimes, if the rebel leader never gave himself up, the family members would just disappear forever. Thousands of these cases were documented over the course of the war, all in gross, blatant violation of human rights laws. It is one of the many reasons that Russia is an adversary, not an ally of the United States. We don't do business with nations that prey upon the innocent. We don't align ourselves with nations that use kidnapping or torture as a tool to stay in power.

A few months ago, Moustafa Soltan and Khairi Soltan were startled by a hard knock on their door in the wee hours of a February Sunday morning. It was the Egyptian authorities, there to detain them again simply because their cousin happened to be a man named Mohamed Soltan, an American citizen and vocal Egyptian human rights advocate. Rightly, Moustafa and Khairi were not surprised because for the past year, the Soltan family has been the subject of consistent, coordinated harassment and detention by the agents of Egyptian dictator Abdelfattah Elsis. Now, Sisi would probably argue that he uses the tactic of harassing and detaining family members of his political opponents in a more judicious manner than does Vladimir Putin, but he can't deny that he does it. He further cannot deny the systematic method by which he has used the judicial system in Egypt to eliminate his political opposition.

Now, a reliable estimate is hard to come by because the political arrests have come at a dizzying pace since 2013, but it is believed that there are 60,000 people in jail today in Egypt because they are political opponents of the Sisi government.

Now, Putin jails his political adversaries, too, but his number of around 400 doesn't come close to Sisi's. But that is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Egyptian regime's treatment of political opponents. Only China and Iran execute more people every year than Egypt, and many of these executions are for political crimes. Journalists are currently under constant threat in Egypt. The country rates 166 out of 180 by the press freedom group Reporters Without Borders compared against other nations.

In the 2018 Presidential election, Sisi had his main opponent arrested and had his campaign manager beaten up, causing all the other credible candidates to drop out of the race. Shockingly, Sisi won with 97 percent of the vote. That same year, Putin was less greedy. He gave himself only 70 percent in his Presidential election.

So why, you might ask, is Egypt our partner and Russia our adversary if their behavior is so malignantly similar? Why does Russia get sanctioned and Egypt get showered with \$1.3 billion in military aid each year?

Now, yes, there are important lines of cooperation between Egypt and the United States, and this explains some of that difference. Egypt's 1979 peace treaty with Israel remains one of the most significant diplomatic achievements for the promotion of Arab-Israeli peace. For the last 40 years, Egypt has been a peace broker between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We rely on them historically. Egypt contributed forces to the first gulf war in 1990. The United States and Egypt often cooperate on counterterrorism work. Our ships often get preference in going through the Suez Canal, although we pay for that privilege.

All that is important, but none of it is enough to justify the damage done to U.S. power and prestige when the whole world watches America deliver this giant blank check each year to Egypt while Sisi engages in this repeated, brazen violation of human rights. How do you tell Russia and China to stop their campaigns of political repression when we so openly endorse the grandiose scale of Sisi's?

No, Egypt has come to believe that it can act any way that it wants, that it can carry out a massive campaign of political repression and that the Con-

gress and the American President, whether he be a Republican or a Democrat, will just keep the money coming. And it is a stunning amount of money. The \$1.3 billion security assistance package that Egypt gets every year from U.S. taxpayers is bested by only one other country in the world, and that is Israel.

Most outrageous of all in light of this policy, Egypt arrests and imprisons American citizens with near impunity. Mohamed Soltan is not the only Egyptian American to be arrested and tortured as a political prisoner. Mustafa Kassem from Long Island, NY, was arrested in 2013 while visiting family, just visiting family in Cairo. He died in an Egyptian prison in January of last year. There have been dozens of other American citizens.

It is unacceptable that we would be providing over \$1 billion in assistance to Egypt while they are holding a single American in prison for political crimes. When countries accept our money and continue to thumb their noses at our values, it makes America look like a patsy. It makes us weaker as a nation.

So many of us cheered when President Biden took office declaring that there would now be "a foreign policy that unites our democratic values with our diplomatic leadership, and one that is centered on the defense of democracy and the protection of human rights." President Biden's team has been outspoken on human rights in our foreign policy by calling out abusive dictatorships who imprison their critics and muzzle free speech, reuniting our democratic allies in Europe against Russian election interference and Chinese misinformation, and sanctioning corrupt oligarchs all over the world. That is great news.

The Biden administration has chosen to make democracy and human rights a priority because they see this coming fight between Chinese- and Russian-modeled autocracy and American-led democracy. And over the last 4 years, Donald Trump's affection for dictatorship, it gave our adversaries in the autocratic world a headstart. President Biden knows the future of the world depends on our willingness as a nation to take a strong, immediate stand right now for democracy everywhere.

And so let's be clear. An administration that wants to lead on democracy and human rights cannot send another \$1.3 billion to Egypt with no strings attached. To do so would be to endorse Sisi's crackdown and send a bright, blinking message to the world that America talks a big game on democracy but isn't willing to do much about it.

Luckily, Joe Biden doesn't have to take the heat when it comes to a change in Egypt policy. He can simply blame Congress and tell Sisi that he is just upholding the law.

Why?

For more than a decade, Congress has been conditioning some of the aid we